MEREDITH FINCH • IG GUARA

ROSE™

image

#11

The Story So Far...

In the land of Ttereve, magical ability is a death sentence.

Rose completes the ritual of enlightenment and learns the true source of her Guardian power. Her joy is quickly eclipsed by the shock of learning her beloved companion, Thorne, has been transformed into a murderous monster.

Ila's dark secret is revealed to a stunned Felix and Artus. The trio's flight from the palace dungeons is interrupted by the deliverance of a bewitched Thorne into the hands of Drucilla.

The very land itself shrinks from the horror of the last great khat's enslavement by the murderous queen.

Join our Guardian and her companions in the next exciting chapter of ROSE.

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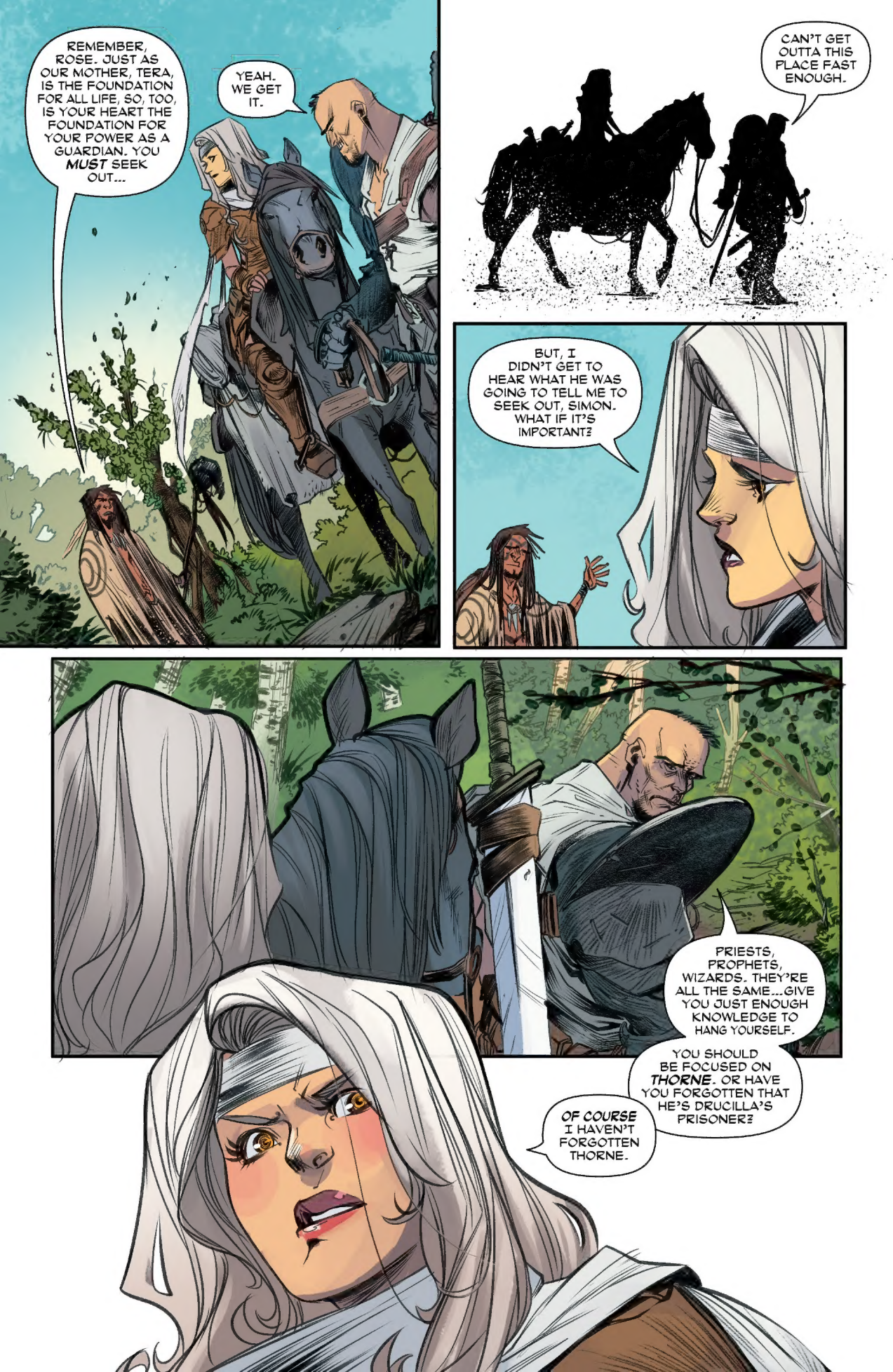
TERA GIVES US LIFE...
...AND EMBRACES US IN DEATH.

THANK YOU FOR THAT. LANA ALWAYS LOVED THE HIBISCUS FLOWER.
IT WAS THE LEAST I COULD DO CONSIDERING...
DO NOT GRIEVE FOR LANA.
WHILE IT'S TRUE HER BODY HAS RETURNED TO THE MOTHER, SHE LIVED A GOOD AND OBEDIENT LIFE. SHE HAS EARNED HER PLACE AT THE FATHER'S TABLE.
AT THE FATHER'S TABLE--?
TIME TO GO, ROSE.
WE'VE WASTED ENOUGH TIME HERE.


REMEMBER, ROSE. JUST AS OUR MOTHER, TERA, IS THE FOUNDATION FOR ALL LIFE, SO, TOO, IS YOUR HEART THE FOUNDATION FOR YOUR POWER AS A GUARDIAN. YOU MUST SEEK OUT...
YEAH. WE GET IT.
CAN'T GET OUTTA THIS PLACE FAST ENOUGH.
BUT, I DIDN'T GET TO HEAR WHAT HE WAS GOING TO TELL ME TO SEEK OUT, SIMON. WHAT IF IT'S IMPORTANT?
PRIESTS, PROPHETS, WIZARDS. THEY'RE ALL THE SAME...GIVE YOU JUST ENOUGH KNOWLEDGE TO HANG YOURSELF.
YOU SHOULD BE FOCUSED ON THORNE. OR HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN THAT HE'S DRUCILLA'S PRISONER?
OF COURSE I HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN THORNE.

BUT...I CAN'T FEEL HIM, SIMON. OUR CONNECTION... IT'S GONE. ≥SNIFF≤
AH, NOW. I DIDN'T MEAN...
HERE.
WHAT'S THAT YOU'RE ALWAYS TELLING ME? HAVE FAITH?
I'VE SEEN THE TWO OF YOU TOGETHER. THERE'S NO POWER IN THE WORLD STRONG ENOUGH TO COME BETWEEN YOU.
THANKS, SIMON. YOU'RE A GOOD FRIEND.
'SIDES...THAT KHAT'S AS ORNERY AS THEY COME. I'LL BET HE'S GIVING DRUCILLA A HELL OF A TIME RIGHT ABOUT NOW.

BOOM!
I DON'T UNDERSTAND?
SRRRWWWWLLL
HE'S WEARING THE COLLAR.
SWIPE
AND, HE CAME SO EASILY WHEN I FIRST CALLED HIM.
HIS WILL IS VERY STRONG, YOUR MAJESTY.
HIS WILL HAS ALWAYS BEEN STRONG, DOLORA.
THAT DOESN'T EXPLAIN THIS NEWFOUND AGGRESSION.

IT'S THE GUARDIAN, ROSE. SHE HAS CHANGED, GROWN STRONGER.
IF I CAN FEEL IT, NO DOUBT THE KHAT SENSES IT TOO. THE CLOSER SHE COMES, THE STRONGER THEIR BOND WILL BE-- UNTIL YOU HAVE LOST HIM. WE MUST ACT QUICKLY.
ARRGH! THAT GIRL AGAIN!
SEND OUT EDWARD AND THE FALLEN TO DEAL WITH HER ONCE AND FOR ALL.
THORNE IS MINE, NOW!

HAVE YOU FOUND MY SISTER YET?
HAVE SSSEARCHED CASSSTLE. PEERED INTO PLACESSS COVERED WITH DUSSST OF HUNDRED YEARSSS. ISSS NOT HERE.

SHE ALWAYS WAS SLIPPERY AS AN EEL, THAT ONE, BUT SHE AND THE PRINCE WILL HAVE TO WAIT FOR NOW. WE NEED TO FOCUS OUR EFFORTS ON THE GUARDIAN.

DRUCILLA HAS SENT THE FALLEN BACK OUT TO FIND HER, BUT I DON'T TRUST THEM. THEY'VE ALREADY FAILED ONCE.
IT'S POSSIBLE THAT THERE IS SOME SMALL PART OF THEIR FORMER SELVES STILL FIGHTING WHAT THEY HAVE BECOME.

IF WE ARE TO BE READY FOR THE MASTER'S ARRIVAL, WE WILL NEED TO TAKE MATTERS INTO OUR OWN HANDS.

FIND THE GIRL AND BRING HER TO ME.
DRUCILLA IS RUTHLESS AND CRUEL, BUT A FEMALE GUARDIAN...NOW *THAT* IS A BRIDE WORTHY OF BAYLOR, OUR MASTER.
CONSSIDER IT DONE.

WILL, YOU'VE LOST YOUR MIND IF YOU THINK YOU'RE GONNA BE ABLE TO JUST WALK UP TO THE GATES OF VENTA BELGARUM.
THE QUEEN'S GUARD WILL HAVE YOU SHACKLED AND LOCKED AWAY BEFORE YOU CAN SAY "ILA."
WANTED
AN' THAT'S IF WE EVEN MAKE IT T' THE CAPITAL.
THERE'R' POSTERS WITH YER FACE ON 'EM EVERYWHERE.
BJARKE. YER SUPPOSED TO BE THE SENSIBLE ONE! TALK SOME SENSE INTO HIM.
LEAVE HIM ALONE, FEL. YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO COME.

DIDN'T HAVE TO COME?! LOOK, I LOVE ILA TOO, BUT YA HAVEN'T BEEN RIGHT SINCE SHE WAS TAKEN. SOMEONE'S GOTTA KEEP AN EYE ON YA.
AND IT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE THE BIG GUY'S UP T' THE JOB.
HUSH! SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT.
UH...YEAH: THAT'S WHAT I'VE BEEN SAYING.
NO, FEL. LOOK AROUND. WHERE ARE THE VILLAGERS?
YOU SCOUT THE PERIMETER AND SEE WHAT YOU CAN FIND. BJARKE AND I WILL LOOK AROUND HERE.

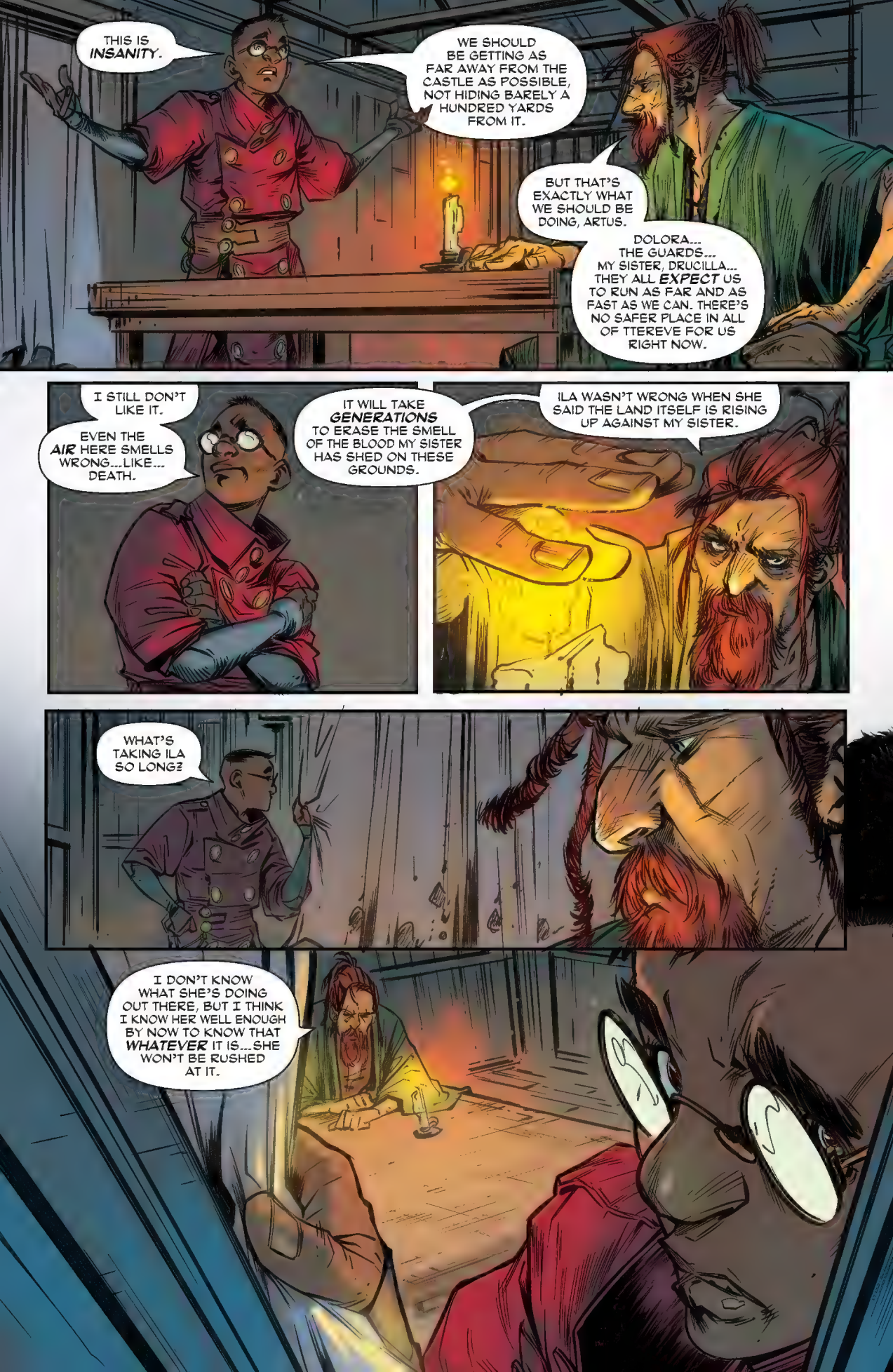
EVERY HOUSE IS EXACTLY THE SAME. ALL THEIR BELONGINGS ARE STILL HERE. IT'S LIKE THEY JUST *VANISHED* INTO THIN AIR.

LET'S HOPE FEL HAS HAD MORE...

...SUCCESS.
WHAT IS IT, BJARKE?

=COUGH, COUGH=

A TRAPDOOR.
BJARKE, YOU'VE DONE IT AGAIN.
P...P... PLEASE DON'T HURT US.


THIS IS INSANITY.
WE SHOULD BE GETTING AS FAR AWAY FROM THE CASTLE AS POSSIBLE, NOT HIDING BARELY A HUNDRED YARDS FROM IT.
BUT THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT WE SHOULD BE DOING, ARTUS.
DOLORA... THE GUARDS... MY SISTER, DRUCILLA... THEY ALL EXPECT US TO RUN AS FAR AND AS FAST AS WE CAN. THERE'S NO SAFER PLACE IN ALL OF TTEREVE FOR US RIGHT NOW.
I STILL DON'T LIKE IT.
EVEN THE AIR HERE SMELLS WRONG...LIKE... DEATH.
IT WILL TAKE GENERATIONS TO ERASE THE SMELL OF THE BLOOD MY SISTER HAS SHED ON THESE GROUNDS.
ILA WASN'T WRONG WHEN SHE SAID THE LAND ITSELF IS RISING UP AGAINST MY SISTER.
WHAT'S TAKING ILA SO LONG?
I DON'T KNOW WHAT SHE'S DOING OUT THERE, BUT I THINK I KNOW HER WELL ENOUGH BY NOW TO KNOW THAT WHATEVER IT IS...SHE WON'T BE RUSHED AT IT.

GREAT AND HOLY FATHER. HEAR YOUR SERVANT.

YOUR GREAT KHAT IMPRISONED. YOUR GUARDIAN IN TROUBLE.

GUIDE US IN OUR TIME OF NEED.

DO YOU THINK SHE'S GOING TO HAVE US GO BACK INTO THE CASTLE TO SAVE THORNE? OR FIND THIS GUARDIAN OF HERS? WHAT'S HER NAME?
ROSE.
I MEAN, HOW ARE WE EVEN SUPPOSED TO FIND HER? TTEREVE IS A BIG COUNTRY, RIGHT? AND IF DRUCILLA HAS HER KHAT, THEN SHE MUST BE DEAD.
RIGHT?
AS MUCH AS I'D LOVE TO FREE THORNE, ILA'S NOT STUPID. DRUCILLA HAS THORNE COMPLETELY UNDER HER CONTROL.
IF WE DON'T FIND THIS GUARDIAN, OR IF SHE'S DEAD...
YOU WOULDN'T! HE'S THE LAST OF HIS KIND.
I'VE KNOWN THORNE A LONG TIME. HE WOULD RATHER DIE THAN BE USED AGAINST THE LAND HE LOVES.
OOOHHHH!
ILA! WHERE ARE YOU?

RELAX, ARTUS. YOU'RE GOING TO PACE A HOLE IN FLOOR.
ILA WILL BE BACK WHEN SHE'S...
WHOOSH
AAAAGGHHH!
...READY.
WHOOPFH

WHAT'S SHE LIKE?
WHAT'S WHO LIKE?
OH.
I'M SORRY. I KNOW THIS MUST BE PAINFUL, BUT I NEED TO KNOW.
I NEED TO KNOW WHAT I'M WALKING INTO... WHAT THORNE IS DEALING WITH.

PRINCESS! SORRY. I...I DIDN'T REALIZE ANYONE WAS IN HERE.
SNIFF
I'VE FOUND THE STABLES ARE AS PRIVATE AS IS POSSIBLE IN A CASTLE FULL OF SERVANTS
I'LL GET OUT OF YOUR WAY, SIR KNIGHT.
NO, NO...IT'S FINE. I CAN JUST...
HAVE YOU EVER FELT ALONE, SIR...?
AHEM
DANTE.
HAVE YOU EVER FELT AS IF THERE WAS NO ONE IN THIS WORLD WHO CARED ABOUT YOU? IF YOU LIVED OR DIED?
I'M SURE THAT'S NOT SOMETHING YOU NEED TO WORRY ABOUT, YOUR HIGHNESS.

BUT THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE WRONG, SIR DANTE. I'VE NEVER BEEN *MORE* ALONE.
MY FATHER AND BROTHER ARE CONSPIRING TO SEND ME AWAY FROM THE ONLY HOME I'VE EVER KNOWN...
...TO SOME BARREN, DESOLATE ROCK ON THE EDGE OF THE WORLD.
I'D RATHER MARRY A PEASANT AND SPEND THE REST OF MY LIFE IN *POVERTY* THAN LEAVE THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE I LOVE SO DEARLY.
I'LL BET *YOU* COULD NEVER BE SO CRUEL.
I'LL BET THERE'S *NOTHING* YOU WOULDN'T DO FOR SOMEONE YOU LOVED.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU THINK I'LL TELL YOU THAT YOU DON'T ALREADY KNOW.
DRUCILLA IS RUTHLESS. SHE'LL DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO GET WHAT SHE WANTS.
AND SHE DOESN'T CARE WHAT OR WHO IS SACRIFICED TOWARD THAT END.
INCLUDING THORNE.
DRUCILLA HAS WANTED THORNE FOR AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER. HE'S SAFE ENOUGH.
BUT, THERE IS ONLY ONE THING STANDING IN THE WAY OF DRUCILLA GETTING EVERYTHING SHE WANTS.
YOU.

AND THE ONLY ONE THING YOU NEED TO WORRY ABOUT...
...IS GETTING SOME REST.
I'LL TAKE CARE OF DRUCILLA.
NEXT MONTH: CONFLICT.

NEXT MONTH

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FLAVOR

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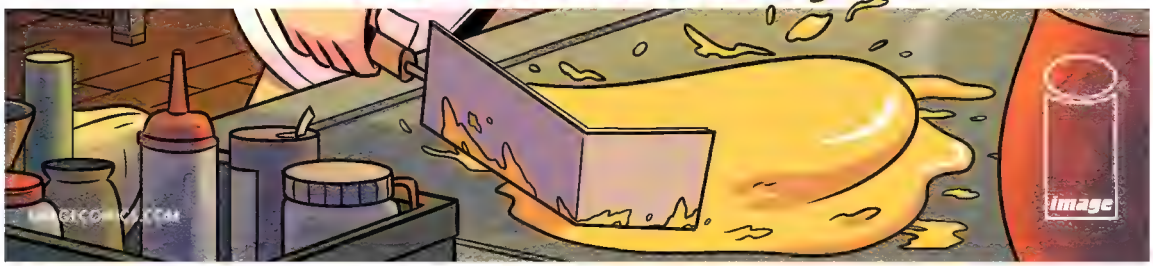

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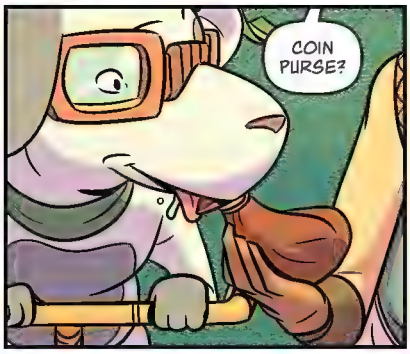
FOLLOW THAT TRUFFLE!

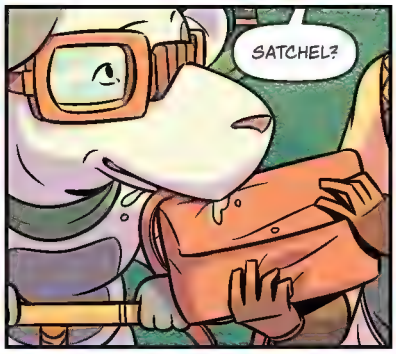
RUFF! RUFF!
RUFF!
BETTER BOOK IT, BUSTER!
THE SUPPLY TRAIN'S PULLING IN ANY SECOND!

I KNOW WE'RE KINDA CUTTING IN LINE, BUT WE'RE DOING THE RIGHT THING, RIGHT?
ONCE THE OTHER CHEFS SWARM, OUR ONE SHOT'S, WELL, SHOT.

BUT I HAVE A PLAN.
SORT OF.


COIN PURSE?

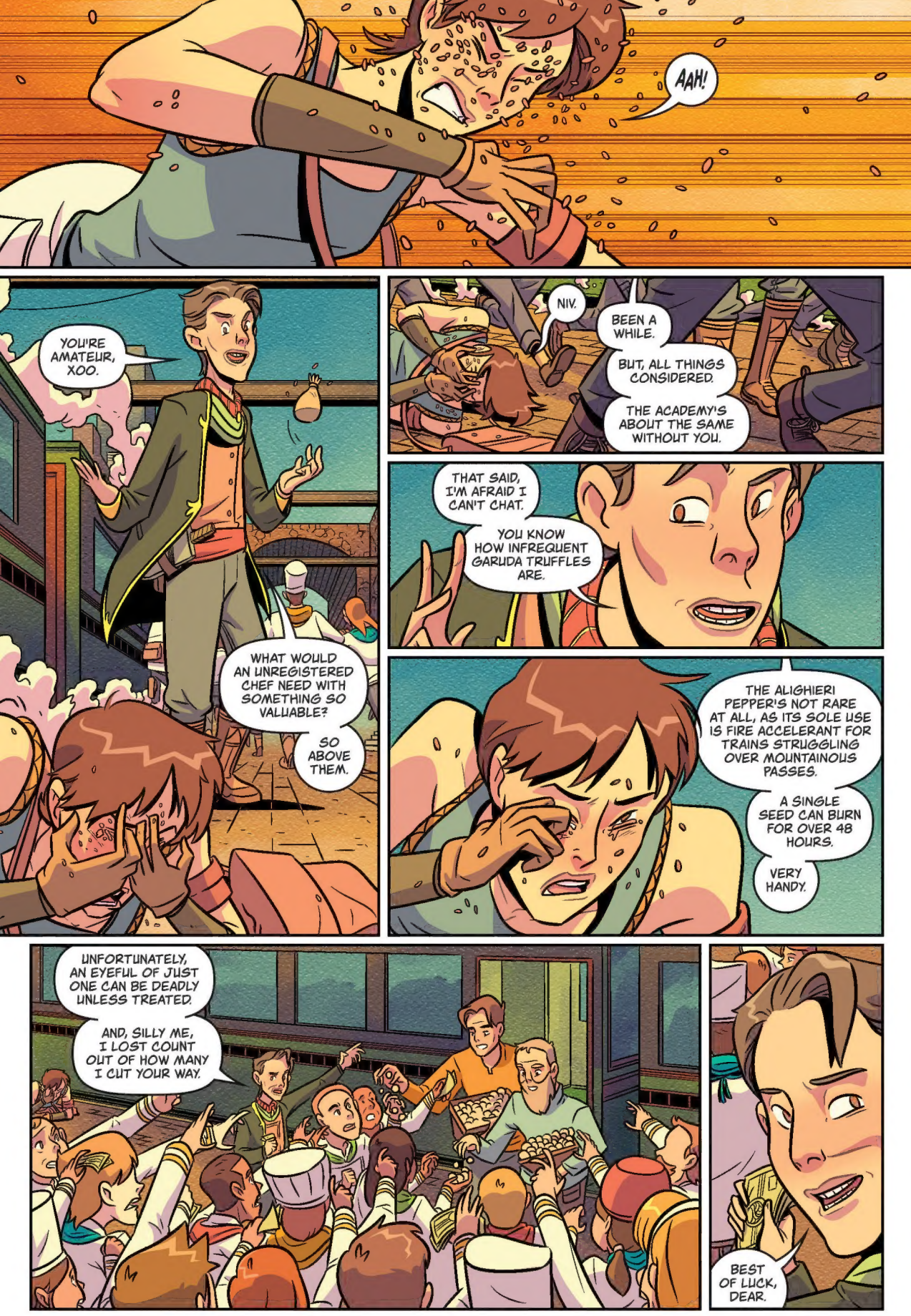
RUFF!


SATCHEL?

RUFF!

NOW ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS KEEP LEVEL.
I'LL HANDLE THE LEAP.
RUFF!?!

I TOLD YOU, BUSTER.
I MISS BUYING THIS NOW, I MISS BUYING THIS FOREVER.
GARUDA TRUFFLES ONLY RIPEN ONCE EVERY HUNDRED YEARS.
AND I DOUBT I'M LIVING SO LONG!
RUFF!!!
THANK YOU FOR THE CONCERN.
SERIOUSLY.
BUT I GOT THIS, BUDDY.
DO YOU?



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HENDERSON GARBETT FABELA BOWLAND
SKYWARD
WITHOUT GRAVITY ONE WOMAN'S WORLD IS TURNED UPSIDE DOWN.
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